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SUBJECT Matre and Burns

[Technical difficulties]

LAWRENCE BURNS: ...the Liberal Party, which is the President's, the current President's party, came out with a statement saying that the country was occupied by American troops, and this and that. He was expelled from the party.

We have, essentially, a military society in Honduras, which hasn't reached, of course, the levels of violence, certainly, as El Salvador or, in the past, Nicaragua. But it's not a model society.

JOCHEM MATRE: Just a brief comment on that. You might recall America always took exceptions to the very strong role that the military played in Honduras. And to everybody's surprise, Alvarez, the eminence grise in Honduras, was toppled by the military. And the new generation of young officers seems to be -- I'm not saying anti-American, but rather critical of America's role within Honduras. There are objections to the social fabric being torn apart by an overwhelming American presence. We talk 1200 American soldiers there, by bases being built, by ships calling regularly. This has changed, apparently. And you have today, I think, a military that very much looks after the national interests of Honduras, which is not what you indicate -- namely, the role of a satrapy for the United States of America.

FISKE: We can maybe get back to this discussion later on. Let's turn our attention to the area in which most Americans are most immediately interested, and that's the conflict between Nicaragua and the United States. Nicaragua continues to insist and to trumpet abroad and in its own country that they are in

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danger of an imminent invasion by the United States. The President of the United States and people in his Administration have repeatedly denied this, saying there's no intention to use American troops in any such undertaking. Secretary of Defense Weinberger the other day, in setting out the conditions under which American troops would be used, clearly indicated that Nicaragua certainly didn't fit any of those requirements.

What do you make of all of this? Do you think Nicaragua, in fact, fears an invasion by the United States? or is she using this in order to, for her own purposes, to rally her own people behind her, to take their minds off some of the difficulties, the disappointments that they've experienced with the Sandinista regime, to gain world sympathy? What do you make of it all?

MATRE: Well, let's interpret it from two viewpoints. Number one, Ortega, when announcing the state of national emergency, did that, I think, in particular, with the internal situation on his mind. Nicaragua is in very bad shape economically. The population is very restive. You have roughly 15,000 Contras fighting the government in Managua. Ortega has to come up with some kind of an explanation for the predicament the country finds itself in.

You have a war situation in Nicaragua. The export of main products is back to zero. By the way, one can compare that to El Salvador, which is in dire straits also, only from another angle. You have to, in order to explain the necessity of hardship to the population, find a guilty party. In this particular case, of course, it is Uncle Sam up North.

I do not believe for one second that Ortega, whose intelligence, I think, is outstanding, because it's provided primarily by Soviet and East German forces, that these informations tell him that this country is not ready, in any way, to land forces on Nicaraguan soil.

I also do believe that the Pentagon would not be able to really pull through an invasion, because -- and let me emphasize what Weinberger said just about two days ago -- it would be not just risky, it would be irresponsible to commit American ground forces in Central America without the consent of the population. And when looking, even after November 6th, at the lack of consent, you realize is in no position to commit forces against Nicaragua.

BURNS: Well, I think the story is complicated. In listening to the explanation about the hardships, it's as if the hardships parachuted from the ethos. Actually, the hardships that Nicaragua is suffering, it was a very calculated product of

3

U.S. policy. A couple of years ago Nicaragua had the best growth rate of any economy in Central America.

MATRE: When was that?

BURNS: It was up till '82. They had a growth rate of three percent, whe Guatemala and El Salvador were having negative growth rates and Costa Rica was having a negative growth rate, and Honduras had no growth rate.

Then the United States put into effect a series, a very sedulous policy, very, very concisely carried out, voting against aid to Nicaragua in the Inter-American Development Bank, using diplomatic means to persuade Western Europe to deny credits to Nicaragua. The most recent example of that was the San Jose meeting of the European Foreign Ministers, where Secretary Shultz specifically told them we don't want economic aid to be given to Nicaragua.

The United States cuts the sugar quota. The United States closes down consulates, Nicaraguan consulates throughout the country. There are a well-scripted plan of the United States to destroy the Nicaraguan economy in order to breed unpopularity amongst the population.

There is no question that the Sandinista government is much less popular today than it was yesterday. And the reason for that is that the generlity of population of any country don't want to suffer. And if the government doesn't produce for that population, restiveness and uneasiness occur.

FISKE: Well, what do we conclude from that, that the talk about an imminent invasion is to deal with that, to take people's thinking off their own difficulties?

BURNS: Well, I've been following this very closely, and our contacts are as good as any, within the Administration. And my own notion of this was that the decision about what to do with Nicaragua has been very much up in the air within the Administration. It is by no means a very clear thing that there will be no military action.

Now, we heard the phrase "ground forces" just used. But that's never been in the script. It's always been aerial attacks and naval attacks meant to destroy the Nicaraguan military capacity, brodly defined to include economic targets, like oil refineries and bridges and things of that sort.

MATRE: But primarily through the Contras, Larry. This is very important.

BURNS: I don't think primarily through the Contras.

4

MATRE: And when you talk proxy forces, let's...

BURNS: Yes, primarily through the Contras, primarily through the Contras. But the Contras haven't been doing well, at least in the past. And this produced a situation where U.S. diplomacy risks the achievement of a Contadora peace process and an election that would be witnessed by foreign observers which would provide the government with the needed legitimacy to survive, and a peace process that would enable them to cut back on their very onerous military forces.

It is no great pleasure for a country like Nicaragua to have to maintain a large military establishment. This not only costs money, but in a country that is short of manpower, this means that folks that could be spent engaged in economic activity, like harvesting the coffee crop, have to patrol the streets.

FISKE: Is that a broad definition of invasion that you're giving us?

MATRE: Well, I think we should clarify here. Nicaragua now is the only country in Central America that possesses main battle tanks. We talk tanks in excess of 40 tons, 120 T-54/55 tanks. Those were bought a long time ago. The Contras only really hit the surface about two years ago. I think Nicaragua was on the road to armament, a very strong armament, a long time before that.

It meets, by the way, with the definition of a very strong socialist-oriented government, which we have in Managua.

I believe the militarization of Nicaragua, a nation of 2.5 million people having an army numbering roughly 80,000, is in excess.

BURNS: An army numbering 80,000, or military forces?

MATRE: Military force.

BURNS: Okay.

MATRE: Military force, yes.

BURNS: Okay. You know, in adding up those military forces, what are you including? Are you including the militia?

MATRE: Of course I do.

BURNS: Okay. You're including the ready reserve.

MATRE: Yes.

5

BURNS: How large is the Guatemalan Army, then?

MATRE: In Guatemala, of course, you have unarmed civil guards, if you talk about those, numbering about 400,000. But they have no weapons.

BURNS: Well, the civil guards do have weapons.

MATRE: No.

BURNS: Well, they do.

MATRE: Sticks.

BURNS: they have weapons. And, in fact, there've been a number of very unfortunate incidents where people have been killed.

MATRE: But, see, Guatemala has no common border with Nicaragua. Let's just stick to Nicaragua and the problem with Honduras and Salvador. I think we have a very good topic to talk about for a long time. Guatemala poses no threat to Nicaragua.

BURNS: No, no, no. I was just -- I was bringing up Guatemala because, you see, the Administration does this all the time. They use shifting statistical bases. Sometimes, like with Nicaragua, they include the militia. You're being relatively accurate and moderate. The Administration will say "easily 150,000." That is, they always want that super-giant tube of Crest.

FISKE: What are we to conclude from what you have said, Professor Matre, that the arming several years ago indicates that the Nicaraguans were in fact prepared to subvert their neighbors?

MATRE: Well, I would have to conclude that. The primary explanation, of course, would have to be that any such revolution will feel itself endangered by neighbors, whoever that might be in this particular case. Now, you arm yourself to the teeth to be prepared for all cases.

I just reject the explanation that it was caused, somehow, by belligerent neighbors. Honduras never posed a threat. Costa Rica certainly not at all. And Salvador is just too far away from Nicaragua. I think it's really an attempt by the Sandinist government to be ready for all circumstances. And they are today.

If I were in charge of an American airborne division, I would not really wish to send them into Nicaragua. I think the chances are not very much in my favor. This is not saying that

6

they would lose. I think the Americans could hack it, but the losses would be tremendous. I wouldn't recommend any such action.

BURNS: Well, it's very farfetched to say that Nicaragua poses a military threat to any of its neighbors, as equally farfetched as to say that its neighbors pose no threat to Nicaragua.

Now, I don't see Honduran-based revolutionaries, exiles attacking Honduras from Nicaragua. I'm sure the United States would know what to do if that situation was in effect. But the truth is, there have been no military actions against any of Nicaragua's neighbors by Nicaragua, for the very simple reason that if Nicaragua was the most [unintelligible] society in the world, with a bunch of cutthroats running it, which it's not, Nicaragua is well aware of the fact that Costa Rica and Honduras and El Salvador don't stand by themselves, that on one aircraft carrier off the coast of Nicaragua, off both coasts, is more firepower than the entire country of Nicaragua put together. And it's also aware of the fact...

MATRE: No disagreement when you talk about the American firepower.

BURNS: Exactly. And the United States has preponderant strength in Puerto Rico, in Texas and Florida that could be within an hour over Nicaragua. And if you add up the figures --and I admit those tanks. I don't know if there are 120, but I've seen some of those tanks. They're pretty big. but you talk to the Pentagon boys and they will clearly say those tanks are absolutely defensive. They have no offensive capability. They never could make it across the...

MATRE: The tank is an offensive weapon, always. It's a gun that can travel.

BURNS: Well, the tank is not always an offensive weapon. It's also a defensive weapon. It's frequently used for defensive purposes, as it was used in Lebanon by the U.S. Marines as a defensive weapon. And I was secundered, when I was in England in the early '60s, to the British Army of the Rhine, and I saw British tanks being used for purely defensive purposes. But the Pentagon has never said that these tanks are offensive.

But why do you stick to tanks? Why don't you talk about airplanes. And why don't you talk about logistical capacity? Why don't you talk about telemetrical equipment? In every respect, the El Salvadoran Army is superbly equipped army. And the Honduran Army, today, is easily the match, except it's slightly smaller, but only slightly smaller, than the Nicaraguan standing army.

You see, the problem is not folks like you, who tend to be responsible in your analyses. But it's folks like President Reagan or Weinberger, or that lot, who will get on the television and they will say that Nicaragua has military forces larger than all the other countries combined. That is just untrue.

FISKE: Well, is it?

MATRE: I tend to agree when you bring up the question of air forces. I think at the present time Nicaragua does not have the offensive capabilities needed to attack a neighbor under the American umbrella. This is quite true.

FISKE: What about the shipment of Soviet arms that we have been so concerned about in recent weeks? For a long time, of course, it was denied that Nicaragua was receiving Soviet arms. The talk was that they were receiving arms from their neighbors or their friends, or old American arms from Vietnam, and so on. It's clear now that they are receiving arms from the Soviet Union in substantial numbers. We were slightly embarrassed by the flap concerning MiGs a few weeks ago. Now the concern is renewed that MiGs may be on the way.

What are we to make of that?

MATRE: Well, if MiGs were to be on the way, they could cause, of course, a real problem for the neighbors. But one would misunderstand the Nicaragua [unintelligible] altogether if talking is concentrating too much about MiGs. I do believe if I were in any position of power in Managua, requesting aid from the Soviet Union, I would, in particular, ask for attack helicopters with a great deal of firepower to deal with the Contras inside my own country.

FISKE: Well, it turns out that those shipping cartons or crates that we were concerned about, that we thought might contain MiGs, did in fact contain helicopters.

MATRE: 24s, yes. The famous Hind helicopter, which is causing havoc amongst the guerrillas in Afghanistan, a formidable weapon. The Contras have even stated publicly that they could be wiped out within about half a year if those weapons were increased in number.

I think -- you call it a flap. Indeed, it was regrettable that the MiG-21 issue created, I think, really, in this country, ever achieved this particular prominence. Because the MiG-21, it doesn't really matter whether it's a very advanced aircraft. It is not. It could only really pose a threat to neighbors. This is not on the list of priorities of the Sandinistas, a real big issue. They certainly have no aggressive design right now, I have to say carefully, on any other neighbor.

The exclusion being -- Larry, we should talk about that -- El Salvador.

I realize that accusations are being brought against the CIA, and in a way rightly so, for not having come up with one shipment. Indeed, as people say, one Kalashnikov has been intercepted. It's almost regrettable, if not ridiculous, that our intelligence forces have not been able to come up with one shipment. If the Nicaraguans are so strong in supplying the rebels in Salvador with weapons, how come we haven't been able, with all the means at our disposal, telemetric, reconnaissance included, with that particular kind of interception.

But let's talk briefly about one particular advantage the Salvadoran guerrillas do have in a very, very uncleared border question with Honduras. The rebels in provinces of Chelatenango (?), Morazon (?), Canbanans (?) and St. Miguel can withdraw into those pockets, regroup, rearm themselves, and be on the attack again. One of the major failures, I believe, of American policy in the area is to have those two allies, in quotation marks, sit together and clear that border question first. I think the Nicaraguan issue of supplying, allegedly supplying, weapons to El Salvador would disappear overnight. Because, clearly, the Nicaraguans find it very difficult to get shipments through, given particular military power of today, to Salvador. The American intelligence in the area is good enough to intercept whatever is happening.

BURNS: I'm sorry. I don't get -- are we saying that the Salvadoran guerrillas are being refurbished with weapons once the Salvadoran guerrillas withdraw into those balsonis (?), those enclaves? That's what we're saying?

MATRE: Yes, yes. They have pockets of resupplying them from...

BURNS: See, the problem about that is precisely what you indicated. In the history of warfare, which I've studied a bit, both here and in England, there is no such thing as a significant military resupply situation where one airdrop, one mule, one dugout canoe doesn't fall into the hands of the adversary. Particularly, at its nearest point, El Salvador is, what, 60 miles from Nicaragua across...

MATRE: Across the bay.

BURNS: No, I'm talking about across Honduran territory. The bay is so well patrolled by Salvadoran craft and Honduran craft and U.S. spy ships, that I just don't understand -- in fact, a lieutenant commander who was training the Salvadoran navy forces in the Gulf of Fonseca was quoted in the San Diego Tribune

a year or two ago saying that nothing's going in over the water. In fact, the radar facility on Tiger Island was dismantled, which was meant to be used to monitor these cross-water shipments, because there was no business. It had no business.

I don't believe that anything's going in. I think that nothing's been going in since 1981. And Ortega told me this. And, of course, I never believe anyone. But -- and it was told to me in a way which suggested that before, as an act of solidarity, we assisted our friends in El Salvador. But when our own survival was at stake, that this ended.

But for the United States -- actually, you remember at that time, when this military aid was taking place, there was merely a de facto government in El Salvador elected by no one. And the guerrillas -- and particularly after the Mexican-French initiative had as much diplomatic credibility as the government, which was essentially a group of officers, and President Carter and then President Reagan -- I don't think any weapons are going through. And I think that the State Department has been under great pressure to produce evidence, and they haven't been able to produce it.

That is, if there is no evidence, why do we say that the arms are going through? Even if they go into the balsonis.

MATRE: I wish I had a straightforward answer. Of course, one misunderstanding rampant in this country here is that the guerrillas are armed to the teeth and receive regular supplies. It is -- let's just emphasize that, and I have sympathy for the warring parties -- it's called a low-intensity war. The guerrillas really have very basic weapons. We talk about assault rifles. We talk about mortars. We do not talk about ground-to-air missiles, for instance.

About two months ago a rumor was started in Mexico that the guerrillas in Morazon were receiving, for the first time, Soviet SA missiles. And they very quickly denied this because they realized it would have meant, in all likelihood, upping the ante again, forcing the Salvadorans to demand for particular counter ground forces.

The guerrillas have been extremely careful in their demand for particular weapons because they can hold out, I think, for quite some time with what they have. No large shipments are required.

If only, from my viewpoint, the Pentagon came through, and the CIA, and said, "We are talking about large supplies," as if they were needed. We talk about a guerrilla war where you do have rifles, basic ammunition, and can last with that being

10

supplied about once every six months for a long, long time to come. But I think the debate is, unfortunately, carried on a very irrational level.

FISKE: Let's talk about the Contras for a moment. The United States Congress decided some time ago not to provide funds for them. We have continued to fund the Contras from other sources, presumably CIA. There are indications now that the Congress is going to take a firm stand. Senator Durenberger, who will head the Senate Intelligence Committee, said only yesterday that he favors discontinuation of all funds to the Contras.

What do you suspect will happen? Will we in fact stop funding the Contras? And if we do, what will the effects be?

BURNS: There is right now in the Administration a passionate amount of inter-bureaucratic dispute going on over Central American policy. It involves the CIA, the civilian leadership of the Pentagon, and certain elements of the National Security Council arrayed against the career Foreign Service officer establishment in the State Department. The State Department folks look upon the repercussions of U.S. policy elsewhere in the world. They also are concerned about -- that the purpose of diplomacy is diplomacy, and not war.

The Defense Department -- that is, Weinberger and his immediate political advisers, people like Fred Ikle and Nestor Sanchez, are thinking in terms of a military solution, as are elements of the National Security Council, and certainly the CIA.

The ideologues...

MATRE: Do you include Weinberger? He just said he would not.

BURNS: Well, the statements that Weinberger has made, including his rather exotic exhumation of the Monroe Doctrine as a guiding point of U.S. policy, in reviewing the statements that he's made in the past three weeks, his statements have been of a far more incendiary nature than have been the statements coming out from Secretary of State Shultz, clearly. Clearly, they are.

And, you know, one has to readily acknowledge that Weinberger knows little about the region, except that this is a prong, as he sees it, of Soviet expansionism. I think that a more sober analysis would see something else.

What I'm trying to suggest here is that the elimination of Marxism, as defined by the Reagan Administration, is such an article of credal faith on the part of those around Reagan, and Reagan himself, that they are just not going to close shop on

11

efforts to get rid of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua. And this is why they went to such great lengths to discredit the election. And this is why they are proving to be obstructionists with Contadora.

FISKE: Well, what do you suspect can happen? How can they keep this effort going if, in fact, the Congress again states its opposition to funding?

MATRE: One should be pragmatic. I do not expect a renewal of aid for the Contras from this Congress, no matter what the political balance is in Washington right now. It cannot be done. The hostility in the country is such, in particular in the media, it's just too great.

Then the Contras -- this is the next question -- can they make it on their own? I think yes.

FISKE: How?

MATRE: I think the economic situation in Nicaragua will worsen. You will have increasing numbers of Nicaraguans joining the other side. I'm of course speculating. But looking at Afghanistan, where the situation is so much more frantic for the guerrillas, it doesn't look good for the Soviets, because they are considered in Afghanistan an occupational force. And the Cubans in Nicaragua are considered an occupational force.

For that reason, I do believe that the Contras will have to make do with a lot less. I also do believe they have been oversupplied in the past. I think aid from this country was generous. The Contras should not have helicopters. They have no base for them, they cannot maintain them, and a helicopter is a very expensive item. I think, with regular arms, with an increasing number of combatants on the ground, they will cause trouble for the government in Managua for a long time to come. And the Administration in Washington would be wise to acknowledge soon that a particular experience in Central America advises against military action -- that is, Guatemala.

FISKE: Where will their support come from?

MATRE: What do you need as a guerrilla? You need friendly territory, you need hand weapons, you need ammunitions. That can be supplied, and it can be gathered from Sandinist forces.

Look at El Salvador. I was trying to get at this particular point. It is obviously quite true that the rebel factions within El Salvador do have the occasional opportunity to replenish their ammunitions depots, their weapons depots from the

12

attack on the garrison. There is really, militarily speaking, very little difference -- I would like to emphasize militarily speaking. Chances are the Contras will survive for a long time to come, causing great difficulty for the government.

BURNS: So, what we have here is one needn't posit a source of outside supply, as we did before, in terms of Nicaraguan aid to the Salvadoran guerrillas, in order to maintain the Salvadoran guerrillas. But the Nicaraguan guerrillas, they can operate without an outside source of supply.

MATRE: I am not saying that. They have private supplies coming from Miami. Let's face it. At the same time, being supported also by both Honduras and Costa Rica, in a logistical sense.

BURNS: Let me now suggest a different scenario, that rather than too little, the sums of money that were spent on the Contras -- rather than too much, have been far too little. There is no way that a force numbering anywhere from 12 to 15 thousand, even if you take the outside large figure, could operate with the kind of utilization of equipment that they had and their far-flung operations on that kind of money. It takes a lot of money to run a military force of that kind, a lot of money.

MATRE: Would you apply that to Salvador as well?

BURNS: Yes.

MATRE: To the Salvadoran...

BURNS: It's a different kind of thing. First of all, the Salvadoran guerrillas don't have a air capacity. They don't have a sea capacity. They don't have the kind of equipment, the sophisticated equipment that the Nicaraguan guerrillas have.

MATRE: Such as what? Such as what?

BURNS: Well, Nicaraguan guerrillas use much heavier field guns than do the Salvadoran guerrillas. Their weaponry is much more -- it's brand-new U.S. military stock. There have been pictures shown on TV of the Contras proudly opening up U.S. military equipment that had been manufactured within the preceding eight months.

Anyone who's seen the Nicaraguan -- I went up to the Nicaraguan front lines. They were using, a year or so ago, six different basic field rifles. And you can imagine the supply and replenishment problems that that presented for them.

The Contras have been getting a lot of money, but it's

13

always traced back to the same source. It's CIA money. And it's money that not only comes through a direct appropriation that we know of, the \$24 million, but also the CIA has chronically endowed institutes, foundations, some of them fake, some of them pre-existing, which are used as surrogate backdoor financing operations for the Contras.

That's why these people aren't screaming right now because they have no money. The money, ostensibly, has dried up several months ago. But they're not really complaining too loudly, because they're operating at the same financial level, more or less, that they've always operated in.

MATRE: You're assuming that. You do not know it. And I don't know it, either.

BURNS: Oh, I know it.

MATRE: But are you then saying that if those flows were finally dammed up, the insurrection in Nicaragua would cease?

BURNS: Yes. Yes. For this reason: First of all, you say that you -- you compare Nicaragua to Afghanistan, in a way, and you say that just like the Soviets -- that is, clearly, Afghanistan is an occupied country by the Soviet Union. Clearly, the Afghanistan government is a figment of somebody's imagination.

MATRE: It's a puppet government.

BURNS: Right. Now, certainly you're not prepared to say the same thing about Nicaragua.

There are Cubans in Nicaragua. What? There are probably a thousand. Castro says 200 military advisers. The State Department and the Defense Department say two to three thousand Soviets and Cubans. I would say it would be fair to say there's a thousand in -- there are advisers to government agencies.

But Afghanistan borders the Soviet Union. Nicaraguan doesn't border the Soviet Union. Nicaragua owes nothing to Russia for its successful revolution. There are other countries whose debt it's in. Of course, Costa Rica, Panama and Mexico.

The Sandinista Army is not a nine-to-five army. It's an army that's grown out of a military revolutionary process. It maintains a high level of loyalty. There are very few instances where Nicaraguan military have run, run away from the Contras.

The Contras don't have a history, they don't have the

14

autonomy that the Salvadoran guerrillas have. In no way are they comparable. And they certainly are -- the Salvadoran guerrillas are a lot less bestial than the...

FISKE: Let's get your reaction to what Larry's just said. And then I want to invite listeners to join our discussion.

MATRE: It will be important, though, to stress that Nicaragua, on its own, could not be the formidable political power in the area -- and I stress the fact political expansionist power -- that it would be without Cuban, East German, Bulgarian, even PLO presence in Nicaragua. The country is backed indeed by the socialist super-international army, call it, to distinguish it from Kreisky, Willy Brandt and Olof Palme. You do have a Marxist-Leninist philosophy strongly backing Nicaragua. The declarations of loyalty whenever Daniel Ortega goes to the Soviet Union. You read Pravda or Neues Deutschland or Trud, you realize it is a brother country, with support thrown in from all these countries. Nicaragua is not alone. And it does have a common border with Cuba, even if it's a watery border.

Nicaragua is not alone, as compared to, let's say, in the area, Salvador is today, which enjoys, of course, tremendous support from America.

It is indeed not a civil war that you see in Nicaragua alone. It is an international ideological war.

FISKE: Let's invite our listeners to join the discussion. The other important point that we'll cover a little while later on, particularly the World Court and the role that it may play in all of this. But we have time to get to that.

...We're discussing the problems of Central America, with particular emphasis on Nicaragua. At our microphones, Dr. Jochem Matre, Professor of International Relations at Boston University, a writer on Central America and on military matters for the Wall Street Journal, among other publications; and Lawrence Burns, Director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

Good evening.

MAN: Let me pick up a few points that I think Dr. Matre may have missed which Larry sort of tossed by and nobody picked up on which I think are fascinating in terms of a better understanding of what's going on down there.

Larry gave the excuse for Nicaraguan -- the justification for Nicaraguan aid to the guerrillas in El Salvador in '79,

15

'80, '81 period as being, well, the government was a collection of military people. It really wasn't a government in the sense that we know of. And anyway, the French and the Mexicans recognized the guerrillas.

Well, that isn't quite true. Whatever government was in El Salvador and San Salvador was recognized as the government of the country by everybody concerned, including the French and the Mexicans, who chose to recognize the guerrillas as a political movement, not a government. And I think there's quite a bit of distinction there.

Secondly, I think it's instructive that it was only after the aid -- the Carter Administration was clearly out of office that the Nicaraguans changed their mind. I mean under the previous Administration, we were giving all kind of -- we were giving quite a bit of aid to the Nicaraguan government, and they felt free to practice their friendly assistance to revolutionaries in El Salvador, and maybe elsewhere, unhindered by any constraint. It's quite clear that the Reagan policy made them think again about doing that, no matter what the situation in El Salvador was. That's the first point.

The second point...

FISKE: Well, hang on a minute. You've made a long first point, so let's deal with that. And then we probably will have to move along.

MAN: Well, I want to make another point that I think is vital.

FISKE: Gentlemen, would you like to react?

BURNS: I don't know how much strong feelings I have about this. But I think that the Salvadoran government in the period that we're now discussing was as legitimate a government as the Afghanistan government the Soviets installed, in that it was a government that was self-created and -- I'm sure there are lots of countries that have embassies in Afghanistan and recognize the Afghanistan government. That may make it a government in terms of international law, but it doesn't make it a government in terms of higher law. And there was clearly a superimposition by outside authorities.

And what I was trying to suggest is that the Salvadoran guerrillas have been fighting for decades, and they have been fighting against a series of unjust, brutal military regimes; and that it was only natural that a victorious government in Nicaragua would give -- that came to power via a revolutionary action, would want to give them some kind of aid.

16

MATRE: One remark. When Somoza fell, in the summer of 1979, shortly thereafter in Salvador a group of military officers decided to stage a coup along left-wing lines, very much intimidated by what had happened to Somoza. When the dictatorial government in Salvador was removed by a five-head military junta, actually, the rebels could have considered their cause solved because they were invited to participate. But you'll recall the real violence in San Salvador broke out following the coup in Salvador. In other words, the guerrillas did not consider that particular reform government progressive enough.

And I think the entire violence you have today, to this very day in El Salvador is the direct consequence of a radical guerrilla movement that wanted the whole hog.

MAN: One other point I want to make. Look at, sure, I go along with the fact that the MiG-21s are maybe defensive. But I think that has a lot to do with the U.S. just not putting up with Soviet-influenced air operations of any kind over that region. And I think, clearly, the example will be Lebanon and has been Lebanon when the Israelis went in there on the ground.

The thing about the tanks is that, yeah, they can be used as offensive weapons. You know, they could go down into Costa Rica and all that. And they also can be used, as the Soviets used them many times, as defensive weapons. But even more importantly, as was the case in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, they are rather effective weapons in internal suppression. And that many tanks suggests something other than just defending the fatherland against outside invaders. I think they have quite a bit of understanding how a tank can be used as a weapon of internal suppression.

FISKE: Okay. If that's the point, thank you.

BURNS: I would just like to comment on something Jochem said. The real violence in El Salvador began after 1980, in the early months of 1980 and in the late months of '79. Now, the overthrow of the military government in El Salvador occurred in October of '79. The first junta, presided over by Guillermo Ungo, resigned at the end of December of 1979 because the military -- it could not exercise control over the military, and a wave of killings by the security forces were breaking out. This wave of killing never ended. Ultimately, it added up to, today, upwards of 50,000 people. There's nothing comparable that's happened in Nicaragua.

And the reason why the violence occurred was very clear. It is because the nominal civilian head, first Ungo, then Duarte, had no effective control over the military establishment.

FISKE: Good evening.

17

MAN: I lived in Costa Rica for about five years when I was in high school, and then I went back and I was there for two years at the university. And I'd like to give you my insight.

In the first place, you're all mishmashing Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica like they're one big boiling pot. And they're not. These are separate countries and they've each got their own little border disputes. Salvador and Nicaragua -- sorry. Honduras and Salvador have their own soccer war that goes way back. And so they're not that together on this, together against Nicaragua, by any means. In fact, they're very suspicious of each other.

But I had the impression you were more into Nicaragua. So my comment on Nicaragua is that the leadership -- about the same time that the CIA handbook, you know, telling them to neutralize, you know, Communists in Nicaragua, at the same time that that came out, the leadership in Nicaragua -- I don't know if it was Chamorro -- I'm sorry, the leadership of the anti-Sandinists. I think it was one of these guys in Florida. He came out and said, "I'm sick of the CIA help. I'm sick of this U.S. aid." Because, basically, they guaranteed that we would be in power in about a year. Well, it's been about two years now that the U.S. has been supporting the anti-Sandinists. And the anti-Sandinists finally recognized that the U.S. never really planned to put them anywhere, except to pretty much use them as a border guard for the supposed weapons flow that was going into Salvador, which was never proven, in the first place.

But they realized that -- I think they're starting to realize that this is turning into one of these -- you know, it's a type of thing that I think Kissinger -- this Representative from Washington state was in on it too. They said, "Well, either you're going to hemorrhage Central America to death, or you're going to have -- or you're going to go one way or the other. There's going to be a decision or they're going to hemorrhage down there."

And right now we've got a hemorrhage, an East-West type struggle there. And, you know, things are going to kind go on for indefinitely. And that's my comment.

FISKE: All right. Thank you very much.

Gentlemen, reaction?

MATRE: Well, just one remark. I think when you talk about Washington's aim in Central America, regarding Nicaragua, we're not really sure. One can go as far as to say that there is no Washington policy regarding Nicaragua.

FISKE: We're ad-libbing, aren't we?

18

MATRE: On the one hand, yes indeed. On the one hand, we maintain diplomatic relations with a country that is considered an enemy. On the other hand, we are supporting the Contra forces, explaining that they are there 15,000, on the upper hand, strong in order to intercept weapons between -- or, rather, to have the Managua government cease shipping weapons to El Salvador; while the Contras, clearly, have only one aim: to topple the government.

Now, the American government has never publicly said that this is their aim.

FISKE: Didn't Chamorro, the man he referred to, say the other day that in fact he was told by the CIA that this was the aim?

MATRE: Yes, indeed. And I think the disappointment within the Contras must be understood from that viewpoint. They clearly do not wish to be cannon fodder for the Americans. They want freedom in Managua, and not just intercept weapons across the Bay of Fonseca.

There's a deep dichotomy, I think, that America is paying for dearly because the population in this country, which thinks, rightly so, it is entitled to the truth, does not believe it's getting the truth.

BURNS: Well, I would just like to veer the conversation a little bit. When I go to sleep at night I sometimes have fantasies of this and that. And one of my fantasies would be to reverse the situation and raise the question that when the United States augmented its helicopter force in El Salvador, Salvadoran helicopter force, from 18 to 40, and now soon to 52...

MATRE: Forty-two. I'm sorry. The upper limit is 42.

BURNS: They right now have 40.

MATRE: No, no, 33. Sorry. The last nine are in the pipeline. Sorry.

BURNS: Well, they may be in the pipeline, but -- that is, the...

MATRE: The declared limit, according to the military assistance, is 42 helicopters, all together. It's perhaps a small point, but...

BURNS: Well, I very clearly remember a New York Times article just the other day which said that they have an inventory of 40 and they'll soon be getting 12 more.

But were the Nicaraguans consulted whether this would be

19

a threat, an offensive threat against Nicaragua? Or did we assume, as the State Department has always suggested, that Salvador has the sovereign right, the central government has the sovereign right to defend itself against external enemies?

Now, what right does -- let's put it another way. When the United States pours military weaponry, including nuclear weapons, into such border countries as Pakistan and Turkey and Norway, does it raise the question whether the Soviets might be piqued, that the Soviets may get the wrong impression?

MATRE: Larry, Larry. Both Norway and Pakistan are nuclear-free. The NATO member Norway refuses to receive...

BURNS: Well, right. But there are NATO bases and there are offensive weapons in both countries. In Turkey there are nuclear weapons.

It would seem to me that it's the height of arrogance on the part of this country -- I mean I noticed with interest that Mr. Weinberger brought out the Monroe Doctrine as a justification for U.S. concern about the arms buildup in Nicaragua, but didn't quote the other section of the Monroe Doctrine which said that the United States will not meddle in European affairs, a very clear provision of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine.

But the United States backyard is apparently on the Soviet border, as well as it is in Central America. And the United States writ is supreme.

It seems to me that it's the sovereign right of any country to arm itself if it feels threatened, to bring in weapons without clearing permission from other countries. Clearly, the United States assumes that its NATO allies have the right to do this. And yet we do not ask ourselves the question: How does Nicaragua feel in terms of the buildup taking place across the border? A buildup which is far more formidable, in most respects, than has taken place in Nicaragua.

FISKE: Do you want to react to that?

MATRE: Just briefly, in particular on the helicopters. Let us not compare, please, the 24 Hind helicopter, which is a formidable attack helicopter, with those very dated Hueys that we are sending as transport choppers, in particular, into El Salvador.

The number you mentioned -- let's assume it were 50. I wish it were, but it's really only 42. Half of those are unarmed helicopters, Vietnam vintage. They pose no threat to anybody.

20

But your point, I think, is very well taken regarding arms deliveries into Nicaragua. I wish we would face that squarely. It is a sovereign nation. As long as we maintain diplomatic relations with this country, it is a very tricky issue to what extent one is ethically justified to actually conduct covert war against this country. It's really a question of international law.

Now, my mind may be made up on this, but many other people's minds are not made up. And right now we are facing, of course, World Court action, one way or the other, dealing with this issue. And there will, in all likelihood, be a clarification. It is a very serious issue because, as you say, the Monroe Doctrine had two sides to the coin, and we tend to interpret one side only.

One afterthought on the sovereign nation to arm itself as it sees fit. In 1962 Cuba, under protest to the Soviet Union, did allow particular offensive weapons to be removed. And this, I think, is considered the application of the Monroe Doctrine in the case of Cuba. And perhaps in Washington, a large number of people in the State Department and elsewhere still believes this can be done successfully as regards Nicaragua.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: I was wondering if maybe we could get a clarification on the last exchange. Did I understand Larry Burns to say that Pakistan has NATO bases and that the United States has poured nuclear weapons into Pakistan? Did he actually say that?

BURNS: No, I didn't really say that. What I was saying was that the United States is a military supplier of Pakistan, has provided large military credits to Pakistan.

MAN: No nuclear weapons.

BURNS: Has supplied Pakistan with first-rate aircraft.

MAN: But no nuclear weapons.

BURNS: No nuclear weapons, right.

MAN: And they're not a NATO country, are they?

BURNS: No, they're not a NATO country.

MAN: Very good. Okay.

Now, Fred, the last time you had Larry went on, he went

21

to great lengths to discuss what he called limited press freedom in Nicaragua, and he cited La Prensa as an example. Now, the editor for La Prensa was in Japan two weeks ago. And I picked up from the wires, UPI, AP and Reuters, his story about what was going on in Nicaragua. He says there's been no press freedom in Nicaragua, whatsoever -- his word. You know, no press freedom, whatsoever -- for over two years. He said the Sandinistas have used agents from labor unions to shut down the presses. They've organized mobs to intimidate the nonunion workers and the editors, that they've denied La Prensa's purchasing agents foreign exchange so they could buy needed equipment, that they've denied them paper so they could print, that they've shut them down at least once for an extended period of time.

Now -- oh, he said the only thing they haven't done yet, and he emphasized yet, was start murdering people. He said that's the only thing that's left, and he expected that to start happening.

FISKE: We have about a minute before news time, sir.

MAN: Now, my question is this: Larry several times has pointed out that he has a direct line to Daniel Ortega, and on several occasions he's spoken of freedom of the press in Nicaragua. My question is this: Given what the editor of La Prensa says when he got out of Nicaragua, who am I to believe, the editor of La Prensa or Larry Burns and Daniel Ortega?

BURNS: Well, maybe the three of us are lying. Certainly Pedro Joaquin Chamorro is lying.

I don't have a direct line to Ortega. I've spoken to CIA officials far more than I've spoken to Daniel Ortega. I've spoken to Daniel Ortega once.

MAN: You were my source for that, Mr. Burns. I don't know any CIA agents.

BURNS: I think that La Prensa is a scandalous newspaper. I also think -- and we have every year that we've issued our press freedom survey, we have taken note that there has been...

FISKE: Let me interrupt. This is an interesting exchange.... Let's continue it following the news.

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FISKE: We're talking about Central America with Larry Burns, Director of the Council on Hemispheric Affairs; and Professor Jochem Matre of Boston University and a writer on Central America and military matters.

22

We have a gentlemen on the line....

MAN: Where we left was Larry Burns explaining that he believed Chamorro to be a liar. Now, as I mentioned earlier, Chamorro, in Japan, when he got out of Nicaragua, said that there was no press freedom in Nicaragua for two years. Now, my question was, why shouldn't I believe Chamorro? And Larry responded, because Chamorro is a liar. Now, what I'd like to know, in what respect is he a liar? Is he lying about there having been no freedom of press in Nicaragua for two years? And how do you know that?

BURNS: Well, of course he's lying about that. Actually, I suggested that all the folks involved in this were lying. I didn't only mean Chamorro.

FISKE: It's a pretty broad brush, right?

BURNS: A broad brush, of course.

Nicaragua has a very, very poor press. La Prensa looks good when only compared to the other two newspapers there. But certainly in terms of international journalism, it stinks.

For example, when I was down there in '81, the United Nations had just concluded a meeting on ethnicity, on indigenous cultures. And they had, at that point, kind words to say about what the Nicaraguans, at that point, were trying to do in terms of their indigenous population. Not a word about that meeting -- after all, how many U.N. meetings are there in Managua? Not a word about that meeting appeared in La Prensa.

Ortega gives a speech, a very important speech, the other day about military threats against the country, and this and that. Not a word about that in La Prensa.

Now, is that a real newspaper? It's a newspaper that is engaged in -- it's an adversary. It's a newspaper that's engaged in a titanic struggle with the government.

MAN: But Larry, you presented La Prensa to us, on the many times you've been on this program, as an example of freedom of the press in Nicaragua. I'm not concerned about the quality of their reporting.

FISKE: I believe he's right, Larry. You have done that.

MAN: I'd suggest that there are many newspapers in the United States that both you and I would agree are rather poorly put together and they don't cover enough things. The question

23

is, does freedom of the press exist in Nicaragua? Chamorro says no. You call him a liar.

BURNS: No. I think that historically, up until 1982, there was no press freedom -- there was no press restrictions in Nicaragua. From 1982 on, the restrictions were rather severe, and, you know, mainly against La Prensa. After the electoral law was announced this year, censorship was lifted. That is, prior clearance of news articles, censorship -- let's call it censorship -- was lifted, except on two grounds: security, meaning military operations; and also certain economic questions.

Now, La Prensa didn't really have much trouble with the government during the latest period.

Now, in terms of newsprint availability and that sort of stuff, La Prensa publishes every day. It was -- the paper was closed down, closed itself down for an extended period of time. The government never closed it down.

MAN: So Chamorro's a liar, then.

BURNS: No, he never said that. I think that you misinterpreted what he said.

MAN: No, sir. No, I...

BURNS: Believe me, you misinterpreted.

MAN: I'll send Fred a Xerox, and he can be the arbiter on this.

FISKE: Do you have anything to add to this?

MATRE: Well, just on the principle of freedom of the press. The First Amendment in this country includes my right to put out a truly lousy newspaper.

BURNS: Sure it does.

MATRE: And when you do talk about freedom of the press...

FISKE: A lot of people take advantage of that, don't they?

MATRE: Absolutely, in many, many countries, both East and West, I think.

When you talk about the free press, you talk about the availability of newsprint. And as you know, the economy, all

24

imports are regulated by the government; availability of foreign exchange, only through the government. The government that has introduced those laws exercises tremendous power.

BURNS: Oh, sure it does.

MATRE: And it wouldn't be proper to say, I think, La Prensa only closes itself down. There were days when so much was censored out, out of the copy, that the paper decided it wasn't really -- it was a betrayal of the public to bring out a newspaper.

BURNS: The point was that the government closed down La Prensa for an extended period. That was the point I was counter-
ing.

MATRE: Yes. But in particular, prior to the...

BURNS: I have not problem at all in saying...

MATRE: During the electoral campaign, for instance.

Of course, we do talk about ideological war within Nicaragua. And, of course, Vallacarta (?), also called bully carta (?), the Big Bull, by the population in Nicaragua, did not cover, acutally, La Cruces' (?) rallies with particular joy.

BURNS: I think you're probably right.

MATRE: Because there's a war on. I mean having agreed to that, we do realize freedom of the press in the hands of a government that does not necessarily nurse freedom with vigor is a misnomer.

FISKE: Let's devote a little time to this business of the World Court. It's pretty generally conceded now that we made a mistake in the way we handled that. We kind of withdrew, denied the court's jurisdiction over the case. The court was outraged and they're going ahead with the trial anyway. We find ourselves in a very, very delicate, very difficult situation here, don't we? What's likely to result?

BURNS: Well, I read a Washington Post editorial the other day -- you know, a typical Washington Post Central American editorial: bad. In this editorial, it chided the United States' conduct vis-a-vis the World Court. And then it came forth with a rather inaccurate analysis of the disuse of the court, leaving out all sorts of cases that were germane, that were relevant to the kind of ruling that the court's being called upon to make in Nicaragua. And then it ends up with a sentence suggesting that the Reagan Administration has a strong case to make and should

really look forward to making it before the court.

Well, of course, what's ludicrous about that line in the editorial is that the Reagan Administration has an extremely weak case to make. It cannot say that its reason for press censorship in Nicaragua [sic], which is getting the U.S. involved and staging massive maneuvers against Nicaragua, and so forth. Because, obviously, press censorship in right-wing dictatorships in Latin America have never troubled the Reagan Administration.

It cannot really say that the Nicaraguans will not talk to the Contras, they will not dialogue with them, because the United States is against this kind of power-sharing in El Salvador.

If you go through all of the kinds of things, ostensibly, that would provide the Reagan Administration with an argument, you see that they have no argument. The problem really is that this argument cannot stand up to scrutiny. That is, in the Washington Post...

FISKE: So you think that the court decision will favor the Sandinista position.

BURNS: Of course. Of course it's going to favor it.

FISKE: All right. Now, what position will that put us in?

MATRE: Well, I don't know if that will be the decision. I don't wish to speculate on that.

However, I think if there's any consistency in Washington's argument regarding the World Court, the White House and the State Department will have to remain very stubborn in continuing not to recognize the World Court's authority in this very field. And I predict this is exactly what will happen, because...

BURNS: Yes. But you see, to make the statement, as the United States did, that it will not recognize the court for a two-year period, it is so banal, it is so pitiful, it is such a wretched, embarrassing position for this country to take, with Reagan talking out against terrorism and calling for a rule of law in the United States. Here he says that, like the stubborn bully on the block, "No. I'm picking up my marbles and going off from this game."

MATRE: But Reagan is doing that, the Administration, regarding UNESCO. And there is a very definite opportunity to do other things like it. For instance, our refusal to sign the Law

26

of the Sea Treaty. I think the World Court will be up next on the target list. After all, another body, another world body that is not recognizing our principles of freedom and international exchange. It really is a clash of ideas.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: I have one question that I'd like both your guests to try to answer, if they could. This whole MiG crisis. One White House official was quoted in The Post last week, I think, as saying -- or two weeks ago -- that it was an exercise in perception management. And I get the impression that Reagan is drawing a line in Central America and daring the Nicaraguans to cross it. And I wonder, you know, what might be the next move.

And my question is, what your guests think is the feasibility of a U.S. naval quarantine of Nicaragua, both tactically, as a military maneuver, an effective military maneuver, and politically, in terms of winning the support of the American public.

FISKE: Why don't you take that first?

MATRE: A quarantine? I understand the word was first used by Candidate Mondale. I think little of it, in military terms. You cannot really quarantine Nicaragua today unless you do it for two years. You can fly in whatever you wish to. You cannot attack the very basis of the government on that level.

To go back to the MiGs, to give you one example. Let's just assume that the Nicaraguans have two MiG squadrons numbering 18 each stationed on Cuba. There is absolutely no reason why that should not be the case, why the Nicaraguans have been playing it very cool, having those particular squadrons there, flying them whenever they please or when the balloon should go up.

I think the quarantine is a ploy, is a game that can be played in terms of public relations. Militarily speaking, I see no power in it.

FISKE: Would you like to address that one first, Larry?

BURNS: No.

MAN: If that's the case -- and you've already said, Dr. Matre, that you doubt whether there's support among the American public for a ground action in Nicaragua -- what do you think will happen if Nicaragua -- or do you think that Reagan is going to take action against Nicaragua if they get MiGs, as he's already said that he won't allow that?

27

MATRE: I do not believe that action will be taken.

MAN: Oh. Well, that's reassuring.

FISKE: Well, how is he going to not allow it if he doesn't take action?

MATRE: Well, let me just quote Jimmy Carter in 1979 regarding the Soviet brigade, and he also said "over my dead body." And, of course, no further word was lost.

Internationally, the situation is extremely complicated. You can threaten verbally. But when push comes to shove, I think you can just swallow your words and tolerate those MiG-21s, which are really not big-threat aircraft, in my estimation.

BURNS: Well, you see, I have to admit that I think this is a loony Administration...

MATRE: I didn't say that, though.

BURNS: No, no. But I'm saying it. No, you didn't say that. You're a cautious, decorous man, but I'm not.

I think it's a loony Administration. And I think that what has taken place in the past few weeks is very dangerous, is very ominous indeed. What has taken place is this: that a justification and a denaturization of the -- of a kind of almost juridical basis for the United States to have the right to go in and interdict those planes, those MiGs coming in has been set. In fact, even Senator Dodd and Senator Sasser, two traditional critics of Administration Central American policy, to my light, have totally rolled over. They've said if the MiGs come in, we have a right to take them out. Now, what right do we have to take them out? becomes the question.

Now, my assumption is that if the Nicaraguans --even more to the point, in his Meet the Press program, Weinberger sort of edged away from the MiGs and just spoke about the military buildup taking place in Nicaragua, talking about the guns and the bullets that are coming in, as if at a certain threshold the United States might feel, though he didn't say this, the United States might feel impelled to do something militarily to Nicaragua in order to deal with what they describe as an overwhelming balance of power in the region.

Now, we do know that very upgraded option papers were prepared, both last year and this year, for a military exercise against Nicaragua that would involve aerial and naval actions on the part of the United States, based on the pretext that a Honduran provocation would elicit a Nicaraguan response which

28

would set into action the same type of juridical framework that occurred with Grenada -- that is, the OECS, which in Central America would be CANDECA (?), the Central American Defense Community, would go to the United States and say, "Look, Honduras, our ally is being attacked. We ask you to come in and help to defend us."

In this instance, the United States -- this was the plan Pegasus of last year. I don't know the name of the plan this year. But the United States would bring in military action.

I believe that if the right configuration of elements are there, the United States will yield to a desire on the part of many in the Administration to have a military bash at Nicaragua.

MAN: Do you think they could get away with it, from the public opinion?

BURNS: I think that the public reaction in this country would be very short-lived.

MATRE: Well, let's go back to the Weinberger statement, which is now only about three days ago. I do exclude that possibility right now. Weinberger said, "Without support in Congress, we can not and should not do it."

CANDECA, by the way, is defunct. It doesn't work at all any longer. So this particular group couldn't come to Washington.

BURNS: But it's been succeeded by another military arrangement.

MATRE: Yes. But at the same time, tensions are running high in the area. I do not believe the countries would get together on that very level, under American authority in particular.

But let me be more cautionary, I think. President Reagan, in his second term, very much looks as if he would like to embark on a new course of detente worldwide. It very much looks since the appointment of -- or, rather, the reappointment, the staying in the job of Secretary Shultz, the letting go of Ambassador Kirkpatrick in the United Nations. I do predict there will be accommodation between Nicaragua and Washington.

FISKE: Well, it'll be interesting to see.

Good evening.

MAN: I'd like to chat just very briefly about the

29

terminology, the semantics of what's going on down there, so maybe people can get a clearer idea.

In your newscast just about 15 minutes ago, the newsman said something about 6000 right-wing Contras to be infiltrated. And that immediately puts a black hat on these guys. And, of course, they've been labeled as Contras, which implies that they're counterrevolutionaries, which means counter-reform, against reform. And I would suggest we can better, more clearly understand what's going on down there if we realize that they are not counterrevolutionaries, they are revolutionary Contras.

The leadership of that movement is almost unanimously anti-Somoza in their background. They were the same people, they gave the civil rights, the human rights legitimacy to the revolution five years ago and supported the revolution, like Robello and Pastora, and the list goes on and on, revolutionaries who are still conducting the revolution -- let's call it a new revolution -- against another dictatorship that has superimposed itself where Somoza was.

And in fact, there was -- I don't know whether your guests are aware of it, but on October 4, about eight weeks ago, the State Department issued a study with biographical sketches on about 20 of the top 20 leaders of the -- I'd call them the revolutionary Contra group, the new revolution -- identifying, I think, all but one of them as having a strong anti-Somoza background.

These are not counterrevolutionaries. They are revolutionaries. And that needs to be understood. They are trying to overthrow a dictatorship and to give to their people the thing they were fighting for in the first place: freedom of the press, freedom of religion, freedom of privacy and property and emigration, and so on.

And it's by inadvertence -- a lot of it is in good faith, but just like your newscast said a while ago, said, "Hey, these are right-wing Contras," which implies they're a bunch of fascists, they're a bunch of illiberals.

FISKE: Well, that's an interesting argument.

BURNS: Yes, but I don't think particularly accurate. But it's an interesting argument.

The original Nicaraguan Contras were the more than 2000 former Somozista Guardsmen from the National Guard who had found themselves encamped in Honduras after the fall of Somoza. Their commander was Colonel Enrico Bermudez, one of the most hated members of the National Guard. He still is the military

30

commander of the Contras forces.

Incidentally, the word Contra is a word that the Contras use with pride. It's not a pejorative word.

MAN: That's right. And I think it should be used with pride. I say it in the same sense that Maggie Thatcher responded to those who accused her of being a reactionary four or five years ago. And she says, "Well, I must say I am a reactionary. I have a great deal to react against." And the Contras have a heck of a lot to be contra. And that's why I say they are revolutionary Contras. They are conducting a new revolution. But nobody calls it that. And therefore it seems right-wing and non-reformist.

And I've conducted a little bit of research and showed that of the top 50 revolutionary Contra leaders, the political directorates of the six or seven -- I forget how many -- different Contra groups, all but about three of them were anti-Somoza people who participated in, who supported, and who led the earlier revolution. And they are contra-Sandinista and they're revolutionary counter-Communists, is what they are.

Let me make one more point.

FISKE: Let's get a reaction from Professor Matre to that.

MATRE: Well, the point is well taken, not just semantically. It is quite true that, of course, the generation, Larry, you talked about, in 1980, the leftovers from the Somoza regime, they have actually died out. Those were old corporals. By now, if you go into the field with the Contras and say...

BURNS: They're only four years older.

MATRE: Fair enough -- you have today the rank and file, they are 17-18 years of age, I think. We are dealing with a new generation. And indeed, the term [Spanish expression], "the stolen revolution," is well taken.

If you look at the [unintelligible] composition, Robello, if you talk Eden Pastora, they used to march to the front line together with the Sandinistas.

MAN: Robello was a member of the original Sandinista junta, for God's sake, and so on.

MATRE: So was Cruz.

MAN: Another thing. You know, if you read back --

31

Fred, you had Bob Laken on about a month or two ago. He was a fellow who was a great longtime supporter of the Sandinista revolution because it was a civil libertarian, broad-based revolution. But now he has finally awakened to the point, and he stated it very, very beautifully in that October issue of the New Republic, in which he says these guys are worst than Somoza. These are Gestapo leftists who are running a dictatorship that just will not quit.

And the best parallel that we have to look at is what happened and what we found out behind the scenes in the secret documents in Grenada. And I'm sure that Larry Burns, before Grenada happened and before we discovered it, would be making the same defense of the Bishop regime in Grenada as he's making now of the Sandinista regime.

BURNS: I read, by the way -- I don't know whether you've read them or not. I've read every single one of those secret documents. Even Roger Fontaine, who's not exactly a raging [unintelligible] liberal, in his article in the Washington Times, said -- to quote him directly, he said, "In a sense, there are no bombshells in this collection of documents." Those documents revealed nothing except a group of immature, silly, overly-given-to-rhetoric schoolboys chatting it up.

MAN: See, I would suggest to you there is a bombshell when you just find that on a little speck of an island like Grenada there are East Germans, Bulgarians, Libyans, North Koreans, for God sakes. A secret military treaty with North Korea, and that's not a bombshell? In Grenada you had a Russian four-star general as ambassador to that little speck of sand out there, an expert in guerrilla and terrorist warfare who was ambassador to Grenada. Now, that guy was not there for the sunshine. He was there to lead revolutionary...

BURNS: He was there for the sunshine.

I'll give you a clue. The United States Embassy today in St. George's in Grenada is considerably larger than the Soviet Embassy was in Grenada during the time of the Maurice Bishop government.

MAN: Do you think that our embassy is there to conduct -- to keep a dictatorship in place?

BURNS: No. No, I don't. But I don't necessarily think that the Soviet Embassy was there to keep a dictatorship in place. In fact, the Soviet Embassy in Grenada, we did discover from the secret documents, was there to tell Bishop to run the government a little bit more efficiently than it was running because that's what one of the great issues of.

32

MAN: Finally we agree on something. He was there trying to tell Bishop to run that government the way the Soviet Union's government is run, more efficiently in terms of dictatorship...

BURNS: No. No, no, no. That's rubbish. More efficiently in terms of filling in potholes in the road and doing other things that would prevent the population from becoming disaffected over an ill-administered revolution.

MAN: Let me make one more little point. Could I?

FISKE: Yes, go ahead.

MAN: I want to point out that I believe -- and Dr. Matre may be able to verify this -- that at the time of the success of the -- or during most of the revolution against Somoza, I think the Sandinistas had only about 2000 guerrillas out in the field. And I think now the revolutionary Contras have 15,000. And I think it's time for people to realize that the numbers are there and they're situated now that they may well succeed. If the Sandinistas could do it with 2000, there are seven or eight times that many now and they're growing at a rate of about 50 percent a year. And I suggest to you before too long this new revolution can succeed. And by believing it, it can help make it happen, and finally get a civil libertarian, multi-party, pluralist democracy down there.

FISKE: Dr. Matre?

MATRE: Yes, the number is almost correct. It's about 3500. Nevertheless, those Sandinistas marching in the mountains against Somoza had the support of the whole of Central America and the Socialist International. The Contras today are, as yet, lacking that support. I hope they'll be receiving it soon.

BURNS: Why? Why do you hope they'll be receiving it?

MATRE: I do believe that they are fighting, indeed, for liberty. I cannot see the flag of liberty flying over Managua today. As I see the central government in Managua, Larry, it is a government which is reaching out into the furthest corner of the country to establish Marxist-Leninist communes.

Let's just talk a little bit, because we haven't as yet, talk about the Indian question, when even Tomas Borge says today, "We were very foolish," but uprooting a tribe numbering, roughly, a hundred thousand, by killing animals, by burning down villages. Was all that necessary? The idealists, by then, already said. Today there is a particular enlightenment: "We shouldn't have done it." Yet nothing is being changed. I think...

33

BURNS: No, wait a minute. Wait a minute.

MATRE: Go ahead.

BURNS: I'm very much with you until that point. Because when I was down in Nicaragua, they all confess that they handled the Miskito issue very badly.

MATRE: But why is that?

BURNS: Why is that?

MATRE: Yes.

BURNS: Because what they wanted to do was -- before the Sandinistas came in, the Miskitos had an autonomous culture out there, totally separated, under Somoza, totally separated from the rest of the country. Stefan Faggot (?) was in the pay of Somoza. He was receiving -- he was an intelligence officer for Somoza. And the infant mortality rate and the literacy rate, and so forth, in that ethnic grouping was staggering.

So, the Boy Scout Sandinistas decided, "We're going to open up the country. We're going to integrate those good folk into our culture. We're going to make them into good, happy Sandinista Nicaraguans. They're going to become part of the national culture." So they send teams out there to reeducate them, to get them going.

MATRE: And resettle them.

BURNS: No, not resettlement at that point. The resettlement only occurred after the Contra activities occurred. They didn't resettle before...

MATRE: Larry, Larry, you never had Contra activities in this particular area. The Rio Coco (?) area is entirely Indian.

BURNS: The Rio Coco area was the prime area of the original Contra activity. That is, the activity in November and December of 1981 produced the resettlement movement of January 1982. And that was what the whole story was about, is because the justification, good or bad, that the Sandinistas gave for resettlement was that these...

MATRE: To have a fire-free [sic] zone.

BURNS: Exactly. Exactly. Exactly.

So, they made mistakes. They made errors. But look, look at what's happening now. Brookla (?) Rivera, a Miskito

34

leader, wants to negotiate with the Sandinistas and take his people back from Costa Rica to Nicaragua. We discover, or at least he states, first of all, when he goes to your blessed Honduras, he's immediately detained by the Honduran army, briefly. When protests come in over the detention, they're freed. He talks to Faggot about sort of negotiating a return, saying that "our problems with the Sandinistas are not the problems that the FDN Contras have. We're different kinds of people. What we want is a return to our traditional culture."

So the United States Embassy and the State Department oppose this negotiation. They oppose the negotiation because...

MATRE: Do you have proof of that?

BURNS: Well, unless Rivera is lying. And since the State Department constantly quoted Rivera in the past as telling the truth, I assume he's still telling the truth. It is just because he's telling a different story today than he told yesterday, one less consonant with U.S. values. But let's forget about all of that.

I'll tell you something, Jochem, I cannot believe if you had a full sense of what these Contra thugs are doing in --they're not fighting a clean war at all. They have committed upwards of 800 political assassinations of chosen targets. We don't have to read that book, that CIA manual about neutralizing people. They've been doing it for a long time. Their chosen targets are public health teams, agricultural teams, and so forth. This has been validated so often by independent people.

I witnessed a whole stream of torture victims in Brussels recently. I saw people take off their shirts and show me where they'd been burned and so forth. The validation of atrocities by the Contra forces is beyond question.

And what's even more condemnable is a number -- about a year or so ago, if I remember, Secretary of State Shultz said, in testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, he said that the Salvadoran guerrillas are creating hell against the economy. Well, that's the stated purpose of the Contras, as financed by the United States, to destroy the Nicaraguan economy. They go in, they blow up coffee mills. They're not after military targets. They're not after winning the hearts of people. They're out to destroy the...

MATRE: Larry, this applies to the Salvadoran guerrillas as well.

BURNS: To a very large extent, it does.

MATRE: When we talk war, it's very important to see, of

35

course that guerrillas have a particular technique in conducting a war. You're quite right, you destroy the infrastructure. You harm the government by destroying what maintains the economy of the country: bridges, electricity plants, coffee fields, and the like.

Here, the two parties, I think, have no accusations to bring against one another.

BURNS: You cannot maintain -- it's just not a credible position to say that these people are the harbingers of freedom or that these people are freedom fighters. They're a mixed group. I mean I happen to privately -- I always did -- admire Pastora. I certainly admired his resistance to taking CIA funding. But there's a tremendous amount -- the Contras are in no way like the guerrillas in El Salvador. They're a much less ideologically motivated group. Some are in it for the money. Some are in it for the position and dash. Some are in it because they really believe that the government has committed excesses. But, you know, I find it very difficult to look upon it as a great patriotic force.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: I wanted to ask Mr. Burns if he -- I presume he would answer yes, that he believes in freedom. And secondly, if he believes that it is the practice of freedom to limit freedom of movement. In the last couple of weeks, it is very well known, it's been reported in the press, particularly in Central America, from where I just returned, that numbers of Nicaraguans representing a cross-section of society, all professions, have been denied their freedom to leave the country, even on short visits, even to neighboring countries. And I wonder when we're going to see a report from COHA, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, about the freedom of movement, or the absence of freedom of movement in Nicaragua.

BURNS: Did you read about that in some newspaper?

MAN: Several.

BURNS: In the United States?

MAN: In Central America.

BURNS: Because I frankly, quite honestly, haven't read a single -- I don't know anything about that.

MATRE: Oh, yes. There was a big report even in the New York Times, that particular, mentioned by name, Nicaraguans have not received their visa, had pages ripped out of their passports.

36

BURNS: You mean by the Nicaraguan government?

MATRE: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Absolutely. One of them is, by the way, Chamorro, who prior to his business trip to Japan could not leave because his passport couldn't be found. Oh, yes indeed.

And I predict the Nicaraguans will be able to demonstrate to the world the amount of liberty in Nicaragua by letting people go. The basic liberty that people have is the freedom to leave.

BURNS: Well, Nicaragua never before limited...

MATRE: It is happening now. And I predict...

MAN: ...ask this question of Mr. Burns. I would just love to see a report by COHA outlining and criticizing and --just as they would do if the Salvadoran government or the Guatemalan government or any other government imposed this sort of restriction. I'd like to see a report from COHA on this kind of restriction on freedom.

BURNS: Okay. Well, now that I know about it, it becomes a serious contender for a report. But you should know that in the recent past, about a year and a half ago, or so, we brought out a series of two reports against Grenada and Nicaragua, both, collectively, warning them, warning both countries that unless they maintained pluralism in the country, they would lose the support of the Socialist International. And we did that.

MAN: Have you warned the government of El Salvador in the same way? No.

BURNS: No. Because the government of El Salvador doesn't have the support of the Socialist International.

MAN: But it seems that you're prepared to help the Nicaraguans protect their image internationally, and so on, by giving them good advice like that. Why don't you advise them not to stop people from leaving their own country?

BURNS: As I just admitted, I didn't know that they have prevented people from leaving.

MAN: But you know everything else.

BURNS: I do know everything else. I just didn't know this.

MAN: How do you explain the fact that you don't know that?

37

BURNS: Well, I'll tell you how I explain the fact. I've been working on Chile and Bolivia, and I've been working on it 15 hours a day the last couple of days. And I just haven't been working on Nicaragua.

FISKE: You're on the air.

MAN: Fred, I would like to address my question to Mr. Burns, please.

Mr. Burns, I wanted to ask you a personal question. What is your views -- I'm just kind of improvising as I'm going along. What is your views of economics? For example, what do you think that the Latin American countries should be? Should they be capitalistic or should they be socialistic?

BURNS: I think they should bloody well be whatever they want to be. That is, as you may know -- I don't see why you should know it, actually. But my favorite hero in Latin America today is the President of Colombia, who is a member of the Conservative Party of Colombia, a man named Belisario Betancur. I think he's a gutsy guy, and so forth.

I'm really not that interested in economics, except in pragmatic questions like foreign debt questions and so forth. But I certainly don't care what any government is. As a matter of fact, when I went down to Chile with the United Nations in 1973, I went down as a proto-card-carrying member of the Christian Democratic Party, and I was a very close friend of Eduardo Frei and his Foreign Minister and most of the former President's Cabinet.

Don't -- that is, I am not really big on ideological gigs. I'm essentially a man who believes in open societies, and I'm against tendencies and trends towards closed societies.

FISKE: Okay. I think we've established that.

Was there something else, sir?

MAN: Yes. I wanted to say that I've listened, Fred, to Mr. Burns a number of times on the air here. He's been your guest a number of times, very interesting guest. But it strikes me as though Mr. Burns seems to take the totalitarian view of the more socialistic countries. I mean there seems to be a pattern to your views that...

BURNS: Well, give me an example of what you mean.

MAN: Well, for example, you support the Sandinistas. You support the so-called revolution in Nicaragua which overthrew Somoza in favor of the pro-Communist revolution.

BURNS: Well, as a matter of fact, you're quite wrong. At the time that the Sandinista revolution was taking place, I actually wanted to see a more pluralistic government come in, because I felt that it would better guaranty not only civic guarantees, but also the survivability vis-a-vis the United States of the new government.

Quite to the contrary, I charge that the Reagan Administration is much more sympathetic to totalitarian regimes than I am, and that what I'm calling for is a single standard of appraisal: We condemn in Nicaragua the same thing that we condemn in El Salvador, in Guatemala, and in the right-wing regimes, that restrictions on freedoms is something that we condemn.

We looked upon the elections as an improvement, as a hopeful sign. We're sorry that the United States attempted to discredit these elections almost from the very first moment that they were announced.

What we're saying is let's call upon Nicaragua to pluralize, and then give it the opportunity to do so, not to slam it.

FISKE: Would you like to comment on that?

MATRE: I just wish to throw in a comment on the real ogre, I think, in the area, which clearly is Cuba. If we appeal to Central American and Caribbean states to establish liberty and democracy, we should not exclude Cuba.

And I think when you say the Reagan Administration tends to be more friendly towards totalitarian governments than anybody else, that I think is contradicted by the eternal hostility between Cuba and the United States.

BURNS: But I don't think -- the United States is not against Cuba because it's a totalitarian society. It's against Cuba because it's a left totalitarian society. If it was a right totalitarian society -- it's been 20 years since Cuba exported anything.

MATRE: You mean to say Cuba is not very strongly behind the Sandinistas in Managua, militarily, politically?

BURNS: They certainly are supportive. And as I'm sure you know, the Cubans have been a very heavy pressure on Managua, first, to hold elections; secondly, to normalize relations with the United States. You know, this is something that the State Department will tell you, that -- in fact, Castro has made a series of speeches, publicly. He said...

MATRE: You mean Castro demanding elections in Nicaragua and not tolerating them at home? That's almost funny, isn't it?

BURNS: It is fun and it's hypocritical, but it also happens to be his position.

Castro, in his speeches -- remember that speech he made right after the fall of Grenada? He said, "I told Bishop that we couldn't guaranty the security of Cuba -- of Grenada, in the same way that we cannot guaranty the security of Nicaragua."

The Cubans today, Castro is one of the most rational actors in Central America because he recognizes that the United States is the predominant power, he recognizes that the United States could do whatever it wants in Nicaragua, and neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba are going to vouchsafe their own security in what happens in Nicaragua. And so he's calling for a region-wide detente and he's a strong supporter of Contadora and he would -- obviously, Cuba doesn't need Nicaragua. What Cuba needs, essentially, is the security and safety of Cuba, and also the reintegration of Cuba back into the Inter-American system, so its trade patterns can be more normal and it could take advantage of being 90 miles off the United States. And that's its primary desiderata, not what happens in Nicaragua.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: Is Mr. Burns maintaining that the election in Nicaragua was fair? Did he not read about the mobs that attacked Cruz and the other candidates that were reported, indeed, on Fred Fiske's show by Robert Laken?

BURNS: Well, Robert Laken is not and has never been my gospel philosophe on these questions.

MAN: [Unintelligible]

BURNS: But, of course, the truth is that the Cruz campaign was harassed by Sandinista militants. I don't know, I doubt it, whether this was officially organized, because this was very embarrassing for the government for this to take place. But Cruz's campaign was harassed. And [unintelligible] more so. He wasn't beaten up. He wasn't pounded.

MAN: He was stoned.

BURNS: He wasn't killed, as he would be in El Salvador. But he was certainly bothered.

MAN: Well, the candidates haven't been killed in El Salvador campaigning, have they?

40

BURNS: Well, a lot of them have. Many of them are right-wingers, too.

But, of course, the difference between the Salvador election and the Nicaraguan election is in El Salvador the United States did everything it could to see that an effective and successful election would take place. In fact, it even laundered over a million dollars of CIA funds through the Adenauer Foundation to a Venezuelan institute called Avipo (?) to be sure that its favorite candidate would win the election. And I think Jesse Helms has every reason to be angry over that particular piece of conduct by the United States.

In Nicaragua -- and also the United States spent visibly several million dollars to create a national register of voters and to set up polls throughout the country.

In Nicaragua, the United States used every device possible to prevent an election taking place, by persuading, and in certain instances paying off, a political party to leave the campaign, and persuading other parties -- this, you know, came through leaked National Security documents.

MAN: Was Arturo Cruz paid off to leave? Is that your charge? He was the major opposition candidate.

BURNS: No. I don't really think that Arturo Cruz was paid off. But I do think that...

FISKE: Let's let Dr. Matre get a word in.

MATRE: Normally, when talking free elections on this famous Sunday, the 4th of November, when we talk fairness perhaps we should refer to this very day. The preparation for the election really was not what we understand in this country to be fair at all, because parties were excluded, were under pressure. The Turabas (?) were extremely active, the so-called divine guards for the revolution.

All that may be embarrassing for Ortega. But clearly, Biada Arce (?) was not very embarrassed about all this.

The target was to gain a huge majority for Sandinist [unintelligible]. I think the majority was smaller than that. In itself, quite some punishment, I think, for the ruling party. Let's agree to that. Even Arce said, "If we don't get at least 80 percent, we should cry and be ashamed." They didn't get that.

I think the proof of democracy now -- and let's just give them the benefit of the doubt. I'm quite willing to do that -- will be, over the next year, to what extent the new assembly

41

really represents the people of Nicaragua.

BURNS: I agree. I think what we should do is maintain constant pressure on the Nicaraguan authorities to see to it that this assembly has a real voice, that the folks who hold -- the opposition, that holds 35 of the 90 seats, have an effective role, and that the national dialogue continues between all political parties.

FISKE: Good evening.

MAN: Dr. Jochem was saying at the beginning of the program that he doesn't think Reagan would send U.S. troops to Nicaragua, even after November the 6th, because he knows that United States public opinion would be strongly against this. But, you know, Reagan landed troops in Grenada without worrying about public opinion, and Reagan landed hundreds of Marines in Lebanon and sent a battleship to lob 16-inch shells and 21 superpower bombers to slaughter the helpless villages of Lebanon, just as he send a full-blown superpower invasion force with 10,000 troops landing after he bombed a mental hospital in Grenada.

The history of United States military action on foreign countries in this century has always followed an incident created and precipitated by the United States Government and the military itself. But Reagan, he doesn't even need an incident. He just goes ahead and commits these crimes against humanity.

MATRE: We shouldn't talk about Lebanon as an incident at all, because there is no comparison.

But let's compare Grenada. It was, as you know, a blitzkrieg action that was supposed to last for only about a week, and still lasted for about two months. It was a military success in a limited way because America did indeed overcome difficulties in Grenada. You cannot compare the Nicaraguan countryside and their Sandinist forces with the Grenadans. I think it would not be easy going at all. We talk about a minimum time of three months. What will happen after three months, nobody knows.

This country, given its present mood -- and I talk in particular about representatives in the Senate -- would not put up with it. And the President, in his second term, will not accept that particular challenge, I speculate.

FISKE: Hello.

WOMAN: I'm concerned because, as I see our country, our primary problem is that we will accept Communism anywhere except

42

in our hemisphere. We will use constructive engagement with South Africa. We will deal with Communists in Poland. But we will not accept them here. And I think it's significant that Castro, as I understand it, told Maurice Bishop to maintain good relations with the U.S. because you don't get anything from the Soviet Union. We're a much wealthier country. And Bishop tried. But because he wanted to be Communist, that wasn't acceptable.

So that no matter what the Sandinistas do, no matter how they try to run a government, it would never be acceptable to us.

I'm also concerned about our perception of free elections and multi-party systems.

Fred, am I right? Weren't our first five Presidents elected more or less without opposition of a second party? After you have a revolution, don't you usually have one party? And the United States went through about 20 years without really a two-party structure.

FISKE: No, that's not my recollection.

MATRE: Now, of course, you talk 18th Century.

WOMAN: I know, I know. I'm just saying that I'm talking revolution, that when you have one, you usually do spend a good number of years with a one-party, somewhat autocratic kind of system, until there is enough time for some pluralism to enter the system. And I'm just saying that the U.S. even started out that way.

MATRE: Well, as I said, in the 18th Century. But right now you said Communism or a Communist state will be unacceptable. You yourself contradicted yourself when you talked about Castro. He has been around now since 1959. He is perhaps not recognized diplomatically, but, truly, he is in existence and...

WOMAN: Well, wait. No, no. Wait a moment. What I said was acceptable from the perspective of the United States just dealing with them as any other government. We cut off all trade. I mean Castro never said he could run a government if he couldn't sell sugar. He never said he could run a government easily if he could not deal with the United States at all. And while we're quite willing to deal with dictatorships in South Africa and dictatorships in the Philippines, we are not willing to deal with a dictatorship if it's a leftist dictatorship, or even if it's not. I mean we didn't like Allende, and we managed to overthrow him and have him murdered.

I'm saying that we have an absolute blind side when it comes to any Communist government in this hemisphere. It's not a

43

blind side that deals with the Communist government next to the Soviet Union, but it's a blind side in this hemisphere.

MATRE: Well, aside from not trading with it, at least we don't do anything else.

WOMAN: Well, we certainly tried to invade it. We simply...

BURNS: We also tried to kill Castro. But aside from trying to kill Castro...

FISKE: Nothing serious.

BURNS: Nothing serious.

FISKE: Good evening.

WOMAN: I just wanted to tell Mr. Burns I agree with him 100 percent. Our tendency is to support rightist dictatorships all over the world, and especially in South America. And this is no answer for us. We are the last great empire. But we are falling, just like Britain fell, Germany, France. You cannot exploit people and continue in this world.

Our history has not been -- when I say ours, I mean the human history has not been one of Communism taking over the world. It's been capitalism exploiting people for centuries. Now we're beginning to see people say, "No more exploitation." And I go along with that. And I don't want to have my taxes supporting people, people in Nicaragua being held down.

I have never, never, never accepted this negative aspect concerning Castro, never. I agree with the caller who just spoke about our trying to divest Allende of his power -- or not his power, but of his logical right to rule his people. I think that we did the wrong thing in Grenada. And I don't believe that we, as American people, get the truth about where we really are. I still believe that Reagan is very rightist. And I'm not a fascist. I would much rather see socialism on enlightened Communism than any fascism. And we...

FISKE: Ma'am, I think we understand what you're saying.

Professor Matre, would you like to react?

MATRE: Well, just to inject a friendly note, right-wing dictatorships in the hemisphere clearly are dying out, when you look at the march of democracy in Latin America. You have left Stroessner in Paraguay and, of course, Pinochet in Chile. Aside from that, democracy is way on its march.

44

I don't worry too much right now about right-wing dictatorships. I worry a lot about coming very totalitarian systems elsewhere, not particularly under the influence of Castro in Nicaragua.

By the way, Larry, when you say he has said publicly, "We cannot defend you," he meant that. Nevertheless, support, given America's helplessness in dealing with Nicaragua, Castro's support weighs heavily, and Soviet support.

BURNS: I don't think so. I think the Soviet and Cuban presence in Nicaragua is symbolic. And the Soviets -- also, I think I probably disagree with you that the Reagan-Soviet wish for a nuclear detente, forward progress on arms negotiations, that Reagan will not take an adventurous step in Central America because this would prove too costly.

We know that the Soviets have a very short memory. If you recall a number of years ago when the Prime -- President Nimeri of the Sudan left the country and there was an attempt by the Communists to stage a coup, the Sudanese Communists, the attempt was put down and over a hundred thousand Sudanese Communists were butchered. Well, the Soviets broke off relations for eight or nine months, and then they were back, trading and doing business with the Sudanese.